

July 2016

News for Pet Businesses

from Public Health – Seattle & King County



Meet our new inspector!

Many of you have already met Mohamed Ali, our new health inspector. Since last spring, Mohamed has been working with the pet business program. He is now responsible for routine pet business inspections, complaint investigations, and providing technical assistance.

Mohamed's prior training and experience in tropical medicine, infectious diseases, and emergency preparedness is well-applied in his work with zoonotic disease prevention. He is a naturalized US citizen from Somalia; earning his MPH in 2008 from the U. of Washington, in the Global Health Program. He has worked in a variety of public health programs with both public and nonprofit sectors.

Mohamed owns a family business and has a customer-oriented focus. He is passionate about delivering unsurpassed customer aid and wants to provide excellent support to King County pet business owners and operators.

We are fortunate to have Mohamed leading inspections and providing the technical resources you need. Thank you for the gracious welcome each of you extended to him. We are pleased to have him as a member of our team.

Leah Helms' continued role in the pet business program is of great value. She has been an investigator for 13 years. Leah is also an investigator for the rodent and unlawful dumping program.



Inspectors Leah Helms and Mohamed Ali

Your feedback and questions are always welcome-please contact us:

Leah Helms: 206-263-8450 or leah.helms@kingcounty.gov and Mohamed Ali: 206-263-7836 or mohamed.a.ali@kingcounty.gov
Beth Lipton, DVM, MPH, Public Health Veterinarian: 206-263-8454 or beth.lipton@kingcounty.gov

What could your pet really be digging?

The Tacoma Smelter Plume is 1,000 square miles of arsenic and lead contaminated soil from the former Asarco Smelter in Tacoma. Although exposure to contaminated soil from the Plume does not present any immediate health risk, long term exposure is of concern for the health of people and their pets. Prevention is the best way to avoid health consequences later in life. Arsenic and lead stay in the soil and will continue to be a health risk for years to come.

Pets can track dirt into the house, possibly exposing their family to arsenic and lead.

To help prevent exposure you can:

- Before pets return inside, wipe down their paws and fur
- Pets should be brushed and bathed as recommended by your veterinarian
- Pets should have a designated bed
- Vacuum and mop at least once a week
- Dust with a damp cloth to keep contaminants from being stirred up in the air
- Cover exposed dirt with grass, mulch, or gravel
- For pets that love to dig, a specific digging zone in the yard should be created that has clean soil, and pets should be trained to use only this area
- Fill unwanted holes with gravel or chicken wire to deter pet digging

Please see the attached Dirt Alert Poster and consider posting for your clientele

Check if your business or home is located in an affected area: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/smeltersearch/>

For more information, visit our website at: <https://dirtalert.info/pets/>



Keeping up with *Salmonella* Awareness for Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles and amphibians are among some of the most popular pets for children, and children under 5 years are the most vulnerable to *Salmonella* infection and its negative effects. A recent *Salmonella* outbreak linked to small turtles sickened 133 people in 26 states; 41% of those ill were children age 5 years or younger, and 29% of those ill were hospitalized.

Reptiles and amphibians might have *Salmonella* on their bodies even when they appear healthy and clean. *Salmonella* is a naturally occurring bacteria in these animals; therefore, infection can occur when proper precautions are not taken. Reptiles, including turtles, are estimated to spread an estimated 74,000 cases of salmonellosis to people in the US annually. Certain individuals are more at risk, especially children and people with weak immune systems. You can help prevent *Salmonella* and other zoonotic diseases!

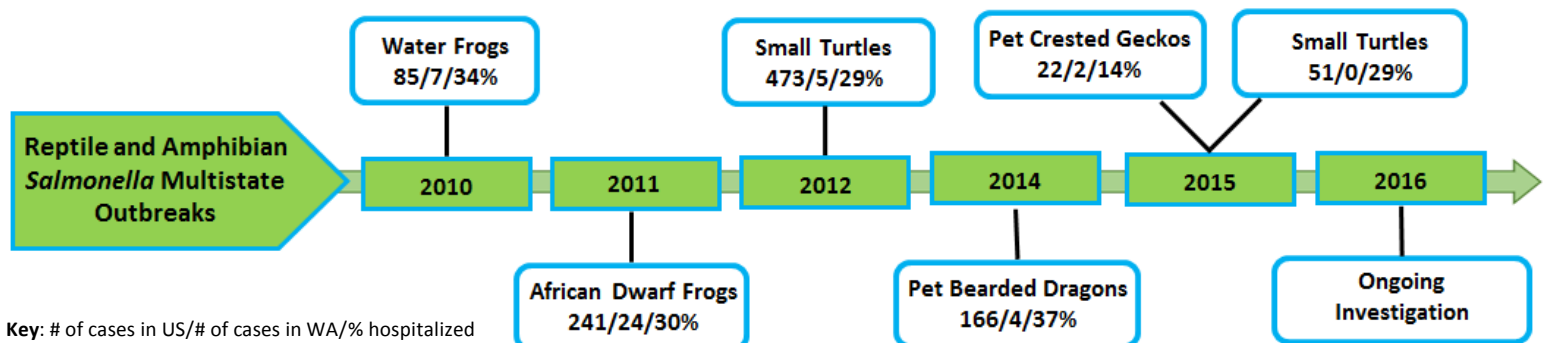
It is important to remember the risks associated with pet reptiles and amphibians and to inform purchasers/adopters about these risks. To download free posters and educational materials from the CDC, visit: www.cdc.gov/healthypets/publications/.

Reptile & turtle owners should know to:

- ⇒ Always wash their hands after handling their pet and touching areas where they live and roam (including tank, the water and any equipment)
- ⇒ Never bathe their pet or clean their tank in the kitchen or bathroom
- ⇒ Always clean tanks outside — away from places that could be contaminated with *Salmonella*
- ⇒ Designate a tub or bin specifically for tank cleaning if an individual is unable to clean their tank outside
- ⇒ Avoid snuggling or kissing their reptile or amphibian as it increases their risk of becoming sick
- ⇒ Consider a different pet in a household with children 5 years and younger; supervise hand washing of young children who have contact with these pets

By following the Pet Business Code Requirements, you can help prevent *Salmonella* and other zoonotic diseases

- ⇒ Pet shop operators must give written information about preventing diseases from pets to all purchasers/adopters.
- ⇒ Information about the risk of *Salmonella* must be posted near reptile/amphibian and live poultry displays, and provided to customers at time of purchase.
- ⇒ If customers are allowed to handle pets for sale or adoption, there must be hand washing signage and readily accessible hand washing facilities or hand sanitizing stations.
- ⇒ Businesses that sell pet foods/treats requiring refrigeration or freezing must post safe handling instructions for customers.



Remember! Other pets and pet products also have a higher risk of spreading *Salmonella*, such as baby poultry; small animals such as rodents, ferrets and hedgehogs; and pet foods and treats that are made from meats or animal products.



Seasonal Considerations for People and their Pets

Mosquitoes: Be assured that Washington state does not have the type of mosquitoes known for transmitting Zika, Dengue, or Chikungunya (*Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*). However, the mosquito plays an essential role in the lifecycle of heartworm and West Nile Virus. Heartworm is a parasite of the heart that is transmitted by mosquitoes; veterinarians can help pets—both dogs and cats—prevent heartworm infection. To learn more about heartworm and West Nile Virus visit: www.heartwormsociety.org/pet-owner-resources/heartworm-basics; www.capcvet.org; www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/westnile.aspx.



Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases: Summer is prime time for exposure to ticks that can transmit diseases to people and pets. Fortunately, tick-borne disease in Washington state is lower compared to other parts of the country. However, people often travel with their dogs, and some ticks in Washington can transmit diseases like Lyme, Tick-Borne Relapsing Fever, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tularemia, and Anaplasmosis. It is important that owners discuss risk and preventive measures with their veterinarian. Make sure to check yourself and your pet thoroughly for ticks after outside activities. If you find one, remove it with a fine tipped tweezer pulling upwards after grasping as close to the skin as possible, following with thorough disinfection of the bite area and washing your hands. For more information, visit: www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Pests/Ticks; www.capcvet.org.

Water Parasites and Protozoa: Cryptosporidium and Giardia are two examples of what could be sharing the water with you and your pets this summer. Both can cause gastrointestinal illness in you and your pet. Infection occurs by consuming contaminated water or food and by direct hand-to-mouth transfer from human or animal feces. Approximately 100-150 cases of *Giardiasis* in pets occur annually in King County. To prevent infection: thoroughly wash your hands after any contact with animals; people and pets shouldn't drink untreated water from lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, puddles, etc.; and pets should be rinsed thoroughly after swimming. For more information, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/zoonotics/diseases.aspx.



Harmful Algal Blooms: Cyanobacteria are microscopic organisms found in all types of water. However, when environmental conditions are favorable the cyanobacteria multiplies rapidly causing a bloom. Certain species of cyanobacteria produce toxins-microcystin and anatoxin-a. These toxins cause harm to wildlife, people, and their pets when they drink or swim in the water. Avoid swimming in waters with scum formations of cyanobacteria. For information on local lakes, or to report a bloom, visit: www.nwtoxicalgae.org/.

Bats and Rabies Exposure: Summertime is our most active time for bat exposures. With bat contact comes the potential of rabies, a viral disease that is fatal. Rabies is transmitted when an infected bat bites or scratches the skin. Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect you have been bitten or scratched. If you suspect a pet has had contact with a bat, call the Public Health Veterinarian at 206-263-8454. Never touch a bat without gloves. By law, all cats, dogs and ferrets must be vaccinated for rabies by 4 months of age and kept current on their vaccination. For more information visit: www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/bats.aspx.

Visit our websites!

www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/petbusinesses.aspx
www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/zoonotics.aspx



- Information regarding permitting for pet and animal related businesses in Seattle and King County
- Pet Business Regulations and Rabies Code
- Information on zoonotic and vector-borne diseases
- Downloadable Documents:
 - ⇒ Infection control plans
 - ⇒ Fact sheets on disinfections and dilutions
 - ⇒ Bleach dilution calculator
- Brochures, signs and posters for printing:
 - ⇒ Zoonotic disease pamphlet for pet owners
 - ⇒ *Salmonella* display cards
 - ⇒ Hand sanitizing posters

And Much More!